

Present: Dwight Baker; Andy Bennett; Hans Brandal; Dick Burkhart; John Coney; Ray Day, Jr.; Dave Elliott; Sandy Paul-Lyle; Holly Plackett; Anirudh Sahni; Claire Schary; Mike Taylor

Excused: John Jensen

Staff: David Hull, Metro Transit Planner; Victor Obeso, Supervisor, Metro Transit Planning; Pat Cleary, Senior Community Relations Planner; Barbara de Michele, Community Relations Planner; Paul Lavalley, IBI; Carla Sawyer, IBI

Guests: Joan Sells, interim Vashon representative; Doug Lorentzen, Friends of Queen Anne

Sandy Paul-Lyle called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Waterfront Trolley

Obeso gave an overview of the issues facing Metro with regard to the waterfront trolley service. Metro operates a maintenance facility for the trolleys on property owned by the city. The property will become part of the Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Garden, prompting a request that Metro move the facility to another location. Metro has encountered several difficulties in re-locating the facility and may have to close service if a suitable location is not found, and if the replacement facility cannot be constructed in a timely manner. Obeso emphasized that no decision has been reached with regard to termination of services. Obeso reviewed the steps that Metro has taken to date to investigate possible locations, work with the city and the museum, and communicate the issues to the Pioneer Square, International District and Waterfront Merchant communities.

During discussion, John Coney submitted remarks [attached]. He also asked that Metro reveal any written agreements between itself and the City of Seattle Parks Department. TAC members offered Obeso numerous suggestions for resolutions to the problem. In conclusion, Obeso observed, "We hope citizens do not have to choose between trolley service and the Sculpture Garden. We hope we can get both."

After some discussion, Mike Taylor moved/Claire Schary seconded that John Coney draft a letter directed to Metro, and that the letter be placed on the April agenda for consideration and approval. Coney agreed to draft the letter and said it would reflect Obeso's comments on a "win-win" solution.

Waterborne Transit Study

Hull opened the discussion by reporting on the two stakeholder meetings held at the King Street Center on March 1 and 3. The meetings were attended by nearly 100 people. Nine TAC members attended as observers. Hull said that four themes emerged during the discussions: 1) The study is going in the right direction; 2) Metro can't operate the service on its own; 3) It's difficult to look at service options generically – "one boat won't fit all," 4) Few people wanted to discuss how to pay for the service and the questions about subsidy were left open.

Members who attended the stakeholders meetings debriefed. Day said that he was surprised that no one wanted to discuss funding, since Metro won't start the service unless there's a clear method for supporting it. Coney said that he was shocked at the categories of people in the meetings – he felt that most represented the marine industry and not citizens. He did not observe attendees who might be potential riders.

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TAC members worked through the same issues and concerns presented at the stakeholders' workshops. The purpose of the discussion was to ensure that the scope of the study was inclusive and complete.

Decision-Making

- Competition between waterborne service and land transit – not addressed in criteria
- One-seat ride – go where people want to be – avoid transfers
- How are criteria for waterborne different than land transit?
- Does waterborne transit actually offer congestion relief?
- Waterborne is basic, essential transit for island communities
- Are capital start-up/entry costs a barrier to implementing the service?
- Risk analysis for route performance
- Should County “care” about growth/economic development?
- Criteria should vary by route to reflect unique needs/situations
- Impact to existing transit service and existing subsidy
- Reliability of service is a criteria for proceeding
- Back up and special service vessel availability
- Does new service open up employment opportunities for disadvantaged communities?
- Understand operating differences between marine and land transit
- Analyze routes individually for demand and costs

Funding and Financing

- New revenue is required
- Pursue advertising revenue
- Explore special taxation district
- Special event revenue
- Establish a higher cost recovery for waterborne transit
- Gas tax
- Use public/private partnerships to minimize public operating costs
- Consider route appeal to develop a politically feasible proposal (3 bodies of water)
- Feasibility is unique to each route/region
- Focus by districts and use
- Service will provide mobility options and should be funded heavily from user revenues. Perhaps it should even be self-funding.

Vice Chair Election

Ray Day, Jr. was unanimously elected vice-chair of the committee. Mike Taylor assumes the role of chair for April, May and June.

Adjournment

Paul-Lyle adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

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TAC STATEMENT WATERFRONT STREETCAR ROUTE METRO'S PROJECTED CLOSURE 3/15/05

City of Seattle Ordinance #11540, February 2, 2005 designates Alaskan Way between Broad and Bay Streets as a park boulevard (under Seattle Department of Transportation control), "subject to the protection of and provision for transportation and utility uses, including Waterfront Streetcar tracks and loading platform and any extension of the Waterfront Streetcar line.

Transportation and utility uses shall continue . . . Such uses include but are not limited to, the Waterfront Streetcar line, existing line and potential extension northward and loading platforms . . .

The maintenance facility and spur tracks will continue to operate until such time as King County Metro has demolished and removed them.'

I interpret this ordinance as empowering Metro to demolish the maintenance facility without replacing it, thereby shutting down the Waterfront Streetcar service for approximately 15 years – until the new Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement facility is complete.

I ask Metro to divulge any written agreement(s) it has with the Seattle Art Museum to demolish the facility prior to a date certain.

I urge Metro to work with the Port of Seattle, City of Seattle, King County Council Members, and the King County Executive to provide a replacement facility at another location in order to keep the entire Waterfront Streetcar line operational, until such time as the demolition of the existing Alaskan Way Viaduct begins. There may be Port lands just to the north of the current maintenance facility that could serve as a temporary base.

I ask that Metro study the use of portions of the line at the north and south ends during the demolition/construction process.

Mitigation funding for closure of the line during the Viaduct demolition/construction should be available to Metro and the City to provide an alternate service.

John Coney
Member, King County Transit Advisory Committee
President, Uptown Alliance,
Transportation Chair, Queen Anne Community Council
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